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ABSTRACT

During the 1970's the increase in the proportion of faculty teaching part-time has been dramatic. The percentage of part-time faculty has risen from 40% in 1971 to 56% in 1977. The rationale for hiring part-time rather than full-time faculty is based on the premises that substantial sums of money can be saved and curriculum scheduling and flexibility can be increased. In order to determine whether the instructional practices of part-time instructors are similar to those teaching full-time, comparisons were drawn based on data obtained in three nation-wide surveys. Part-time instructors were found to have less teaching experience, to have taught fewer years at their current institutions, and to hold lower academic credentials. The adjunct faculty also had less input into the selection of materials used in their course, assigned fewer pages to read, used less instructional media, recommended or required fewer out-of-class activities, and placed less emphasis on written assignments in determining student grades. Part-time instructors were also less aware of campus activities and less likely to use or have access to instructional support services. In terms of professional development, they read fewer scholarly journals, were less likely to hold membership in professional associations or attend professional meetings, and were less likely to request release time; however, they were more likely to express a need for interaction with colleagues and administrators. (MB)

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INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES OF PART-TIME FACULTY IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES

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INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES OF PART-TIME VERSUS FULL-TIME FACULTY IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES

One of the most dramatic changes that has occurred in community colleges during the 1970s has been the rapid increase in the proportion of faculty teaching part-time. According to the Community, Junior, and Technical College Directory (American Association of Junior Colleges, 1972; 1978), the number of faculty employed part-time increased from 48,572 in 1971 to 116,439 in 1977, a 140 percent rise in these instructors, while those teaching full-time rose at a rate of only 20 percent. In terms of percentages, the faculty employed in community colleges part-time has grown from 40 percent in 1971 to 56 percent in 1977. Thus, as noted by Hammons, Wallace, and Watts (1978), part-time instructors now comprise between 40 and 60 percent of the faculty at a significant number of colleges. This rapid transformation in the composition of the two-year college faculty has generated much debate on whether hiring part-time instead of full-time instructors contributes to or detracts from the quality of instruction provided by community colleges.

The rationale for hiring part-time in lieu of full-time faculty is based on two premises. The first is that colleges can save substantial sums of money by using adjunct instead of regular instructors. The former can be paid much less than the latter for the same amount of work; part-timers paid on an hourly rate typically receive only

from one-third to one-half of the salary paid full-timers who teach the same courses (Lombardi; 1975). Additional savings are realized by most community colleges through their policies of not paying part-time teachers for course-related activities that take place outside the classroom (e.g., class preparation, office hours, attendance at departmental meetings, participation in professional development activities); excluding them from receiving fringe benefits, salary increases, and the right to earn security of employment; and by not extending to them many of the college's instructional support services (e.g., secretarial help, instructional media services, and staff development programs).

Since much of institutional funding is based on student attendance, colleges receive the same money whether the students are taught by full-timers or otherwise. Thus, the part-timers, in effect, generate a savings for the college where they teach. The financial gain that colleges can realize from hiring part-time faculty is evidenced in the following description of the employment practices of a California community college:

> During the year 1975-76, part-time instructors were paid at the rate of $14.75. This rate did not take into consideration many variables such as prior teaching experiences, educational background, or hours spent in classroom preparation. These instructors were also denied fringe benefits. As a result, they received only approximately 40 percent of the pro-rated salary of full-time teachers even though they taught the same courses for which students received the same credit and for which the college district received the same amount of money from the state. In that one academic year this middle-size urban college saved a total of $2,467,000 due to the large differential between hourly and full-time salaries (Abel, 1977, p. 78).

The second premise for employing part-time instructors instead of those teaching full-time is that through this practice the college can increase its curriculum and scheduling flexibility. It can hire faculty with special skills for regular and non-traditional courses that the full-time faculty are not prepared to teach; schedule classes in a variety of off-campus locations and at a variety of times (e.g., evenings, weekends); use part-timers to staff courses whose success in terms of enrollments is uncertain, thus providing administrators with the option of cancelling the course and the instructor's contract at little or no cost to the college; and since part-timers are not provided with security of employment or tenure, the colleges can hire or fire part-time faculty as a means of responding to sudden shifts in student interests and enrollments.

An important assumption underlying the decision to hire part-time faculty is that the instruction they provide is of equal quality with that provided by the regular staff. Among the arguments advanced in support of this assumption are the following: since part-timers hold the same teaching credentials as full-timers, the instruction delivered should be the same; both groups perform the same instructional activities--they meet their classes, give their lectures, listen to student recitals, and turn in the grades. To date, there is no statistical evidence that students who enroll in courses taught by adjunct faculty receive an inferior quality of instruction to that offered by full-time instructors.

The purpose of this study is to determine whether the instructional-related practices of part-time instructors are similar to those teaching

full-time in the two-year college. Comparisons between the two groups will be made on the following criteria: teaching experience, length of time teaching at the current institution; academic preparation; input into the selection of course materials; reading requirements; use of instructional media; availability and use of instructional support services; use of out-of-class activities for course; grading practices; and interest and participation in professional development activities.

Method

Comparisons between adjunct and full-time faculty are based on data obtained in three nation-wide surveys conducted recently by the Center for the Study of Community Colleges (CSCC) under grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the National Science Foundation (NSF).

The methodologies used in each of the three surveys considered in this study were very similar. The following steps were taken in each of the surveys: (1) a stratified random sample of colleges was drawn from the most recent Community, Junior, and Technical College Directory. The colleges were stratified on the basis of size and whether or not they were public or private; (2) class schedules were obtained from each of the sample colleges for the term the survey was to be conducted; (3) the class sections appearing in the class schedules were counted separately for the disciplines to be surveyed; (4) for each discipline, a random sample of between 12 and 15 percent

of the class sections was selected; and (5) a questionnaire was sent to the instructor who was assigned to teach the class section sampled. Approximately 84 percent of the instructors in each of the three surveys responded to the questionnaires.

Two comparisons--length of time teaching at one's current institution and involvement in professional development activities--were based on 1975 survey data obtained from representative samples of 382 part-time and 1,603 full-time two-year college humanities instructors and nonhumanities chairpersons (See Cohen, 1977, for complete methodology). The remaining comparisons were based on two nationwide studies of the instructional practices used by representative samples of 351 part-time and 1,669 full-time humanities, science, and social science faculty members in a predesignated course that they were currently teaching. The survey of the 147 part-time and 613 full-time instructors teaching a course in an area under the purview of NEH was conducted in the fall of 1977 (methodology reported in Friedlander, 1979). The 204 part-time and 1,056 full-time faculty members teaching a science or social science course in an area under the jurisdiction of NSF was conducted in the spring of 1978.

In each of the three surveys, determination of employment status was based on a questionnaire item in which respondents indicated whether they were considered as full-time or part-time instructors at their college. The number of part-time and full-time instructors involved in each of the studies, response rates, and the disciplines surveyed are summarized in Table 1.

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Insert Table 1 about here
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Results

Teaching Experience

The findings of the instructor surveys reported in Table 2 show that the full-time faculty staff had much more teaching experience than the part-time staff. Close to 90 percent of the former as compared to 55 percent of the latter had three or more years of teaching experience. The difference between the two groups was even more dramatic at the lower end of the teaching experience continuum where four percent of the full-time faculty members had less than one year of teaching experience as compared to 18 percent of the part-time faculty members.

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Insert Table 2 about here

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Continuity of Employment

Part-timers were not only less experienced in teaching than full-timers, but, as evidenced in Table 2, the also had taught fewer years in their current institution. Data from the 1975 faculty survey showed that 55 percent of the part-time instructors had taught at their current college for two years or less whereas only 13 percent of the full-timers fell into that category.

the more graduate work faculty members have had, the better qualified they are to teach at the college level. The data presented in Table 2 show that 21 percent of the part-timers, as compared to five percent of the full-timers, had not earned an academic degree beyond the baccalaureate.

Selection of Course Materials

Respondents to the instructor surveys were asked to indicate the extent to which they had control over the selection of reading materials to be used in their course. The data summarized in Table 3 reveal that a much greater percentage of part-time than full-time faculty indicated that they had no say in the selection of such materials used in their class as: textbooks (53% vs. 11.3%); laboratory materials and workbooks (50% vs. 9.3%); reference books (13.2% vs. 5.3%); and collections of readings (12% vs. 4.6%). It seems safe to assume that many faculty members would find it easier to teach a course based on materials of their own choice than on those selected by others. Some support for this assertion comes from the finding that 19.7 percent of the part-time faculty and 8 percent of the full-time faculty said that their course could be improved if they had "more freedom to choose course materials."

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Insert Table 3 about here

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Reading Requirements for Students

One of the questions asked of the two-year college faculty members was, "How many pages do you require your students to read?" The data appearing in Table 3 show that, on the average, full-time instructors asked their students to read more pages in each of the eight instructional material categories than did part-time faculty members. On average, part-timers required their students to read 402 pages for a course; full-timers, 551 pages.

Use of Instructional Media

A much greater percentage of full-time than part-time faculty reported that they used some form of instructional media in their classes (47.5% vs. 32.7%). The instructors were also asked to indicate which of 14 types of instructional aids they utilized in their courses. The information as reported in Table 4 shows that, with one exception (maps/charts/illustrations/displays), a higher percentage of full-time than part-time faculty used the various instructional media considered. To illustrate, full-timers were more likely than the part-timers to use films (59.7% vs. 46.2%), overhead projected transparencies (44.9% vs. 30.2%), scientific instruments (42.1% vs. 27.5%), slides (38.5% vs. 29.9%), film strips (29.3% vs. 19.1%), and video tapes (26.4% vs. 15.1%).

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Insert Table 4 about here

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One reason for these differences is apparent: a much greater percentage of the part-time than full-time faculty members (43% vs. 31.8%) said that they did not have access to media production facilities and/or assistance.

Use of Out-of-Class Activities

The full-timers were more likely than the part-timers either to recommend or require that their students attend each of eleven out-of-class events on the campus or in the community. The largest differences between the two groups were in the percentages who encouraged their students to attend: on-campus educational films (41.9% vs. 30.2%), other films (36.3% vs. 30.2%), outside lectures (43.7% vs. 33.6%), television programs (47.5% vs. 40.5%), theatrical productions (45% vs. 33%), and concerts or recitals (38% vs. 31%). (The latter two items were asked of only the humanities faculty.) An important insight into why these differences occurred comes from the finding of the 1975 instructor survey which showed that the part-timers were more than three times as likely as the full-timers to respond "Don't know," to the question of whether their college provided students with too few, sufficient, or too many colloquiums and seminars (26% vs. 7%), lectures (20% vs. 4%), exhibits (19% vs. 5%) concerts/recitals (19% vs. 4%), and films (18% vs. 5%).

Use of Instructional Support Services

Most educational institutions provide their faculty with support services designed to enhance the instructional process. Respondents

to the surveys were asked to indicate whether each of eight college support services were available to them, and if so, whether or not they took advantage of the service in their particular class used in the study. Results to these items, presented in Table 5, show that full-timers were more likely than the part-timers to use each of the eight support services in their classes. Not only were the part-timers less likely than the full-timers to use the support services, they were also less likely to report that the various services were available to them.

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Insert Table 5 about here

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Grading Practices

A greater percentage of full-time than part-time faculty based their grades on student activities which, in most instances, required out-of-class time to grade. These activities included: quick score/objective tests (73% vs. 64%), essay exams (61% vs. 53%), field reports (13% vs. 11%), and workbook completion (16% vs. 11%). Conversely, a greater percentage of part-timers than full-timers based their grades on student activities that could be graded in class. These included: oral reports (30% vs. 26%), participation in class discussions (55% vs. 46%), and regular class attendance (51% vs. 41%). There were no differences in the percentage of part-time and full-time instructors who based their grades in part on papers written out of class (45%) and on papers written in class (20%).

Involvement in Professional Activities

In terms of involvement in professional growth activities, a smaller percentage of part-time than full-time faculty who responded to the 1975 instructor survey reported that they read scholarly journals (67% vs. 77%) or professional education journals (26% vs. 39%), belonged to a professional organization (63% vs. 82%) attended a professional meeting (38% vs. 40%), or presented a professional paper (8% vs. 11%). Additional information concerning involvement in professional development activities--including interaction with colleagues--was obtained from a series of items on the 1977 and 1978 instructor surveys which asked instructors to indicate what was needed to make their course better. A much higher percentage of part-time than full-time instructors noted that their course could be improved through greater interaction with colleagues and administrators (29% vs. 17%). The full-timers, on the other hand, were more interested than their part-time counterparts in desiring release time to develop their courses and/or materials (41% vs. 20%) and in participating in professional development programs (30% vs. 23%).

Discussion

The primary purpose of this study was to test the assumption that the instructional-related activities of part-time faculty were similar to those of full-time faculty. The findings reported in this paper demonstrate that the part-timers differed from the full-timers on most

of the measures related to instructional practices that were used in the surveys of two-year college faculty. Specifically, when compared to their full-time counterparts, part-time instructors were found to have less teaching experience, to have taught fewer years at their current institution, and to hold lower academic credentials. The adjunct instructors also differed from the full-time staff in that they had less input into the selection of materials to be used in their course, assigned fewer pages to read, used less instructional media, recommended or required students to attend fewer out-of-class activities, and placed less emphasis on written assignments in determining student grades. In addition, part-timers in comparison to full-timers were less aware of campus activities and events and were less likely to have access to or to use the college's instructional support services. In terms of professional development activities, part-timers differed from full-timers in that they read fewer scholarly and educational journals, were less likely to hold membership in professional associations or to attend or to participate in professional meetings, and were less likely to express a desire for release time to develop their course or to participate in professional growth programs. They were, on the other hand, more likely than the full-timers to express the need for more interaction with colleagues and administrators.

These findings, when considered along with those reported in other studies, i.e., that part-timers are less likely than full-timers to maintain office hours, to serve on curriculum development committees, or to work with other instructors, administrators, and support services

personnel (Lombardi, 1975), clearly demonstrate that there are systematic differences in the instructional-related practices of these two groups.

Quality of Instruction

The question that now needs to be addressed is whether the current practice of employing part-time instead of full-time faculty detracts from the overall quality of the two-year colleges' educational programs. If, as it is commonly assumed, such factors as academic degree attainment, teaching experience, continuity of employment, knowledge of one's educational environment, use of instructional technologies, involvement in educational policy decisions, maintenance of office hours, interaction with colleagues, and participation in professional development activities all contribute to program effectiveness, then one could conclude that the quality of instruction provided by an institution is likely to be adversely affected as the number of faculty employed part-time increases. However, it is important to note that to date no study has yet demonstrated the relationship between these factors and the attainment of desired educational objectives of the college, which include: the amount of student learning, student satisfaction with college, the development of instructional methods and materials, soundness of the policies affecting the curriculum, professional development of instructors, and faculty morale.

Research is needed to determine how the factors upon which the two groups of instructors differ are related to the quality of an institution's educational programs. Availability of this information

would allow for an accurate assessment of the relative costs and benefits of hiring part-time instead of full-time instructors. This information would also provide a sound base upon which to develop policies concerning the hiring and training of a college's part-time staff, the conditions of their employment and the evaluation of their performance. Until such information is available, administrators in deciding whether to hire an adjunct instead of a full-time instructor should determine, as best they can, the immediate and long-term effects their decision will have on the attainment of the educational objectives of the college.

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Table 1

Summary of the Sample Size and Response Rate in Each of the Three Surveys of Community College Faculty*

Year of Survey	Number of Colleges in Survey	Number of Full-Time Faculty	Number of Part-Time Faculty	Response Rate
1975	1096	1382	204	84%
1977	178	613	147	84%
1978	175	1056	204	85.5%

*Note. Complete descriptions of the methodologies used in the instructor surveys can be found in the following reports: 1975 survey (Cohen and Brawer, 1977); 1977 survey (Hill, 1979); 1978 survey (Friedlander, 1979).

The 1975 and 1977 surveys involved courses in either history or appreciation of art, music, or theater, as well as courses in cultural anthropology, literature, foreign languages, history, philosophy, political science, interdisciplinary studies in the humanities, and social/ethnic studies. These courses all fell within the National Endowment for the Humanities' (the sponsoring agency) definition of the humanities.

The 1978 survey involved courses in anthropology (excluding cultural anthropology), biology, agriculture, chemistry, earth/space science, economics, engineering, integrated science, mathematics, physics, sociology, and psychology. The courses all fell within the National Science Foundation's (the sponsoring agency) definition of the sciences.

Table 2

Comparison of Part-Time and Full-Time Instructors on Teaching Experience and Degree Attainment (Percentages)

Years Taught in Any Two-Year College	Part-Time (N=733)	Full-Time (N=2765)
Less than one year	18.4	3.8
One-two years	24.1	6.7
Three or more years	54.3	89.2
Years Taught at Current Institution[a]		
Less than one year	24.6	4.2
One-two years	30.1	7.8
Three or more years	45.3	88.0
Highest Degree Held[b]		
B.A.	21.4	5.6
Masters	62.2	77.6
Doctorate	16.4	16.8

[a]Note. Percentages based on the 1096 full-time and 382 part-time instructors who participated in the 1975 NEH-sponsored survey.

[b]Percentages based on the 1669 full-time and 351 part-time instructors who participated in either the 1977 or 1978 surveys of instructional practices.

Table 3

Comparison of Part-Time and Full-Time Instructors on Selection of Course Materials and Reading Requirements

Reading Material	Average Number of Pages Required		Input into Selection of Material*					
			None		Some		Total	
	Part-Time (N=351)	Full-Time (N=1669)	Part-Time	Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time
			(Percentages)					
Textbooks	258	316	53.0	11.3	14.1	35.9	25.4	47.4
Laboratory materials and workbooks	61	81	50.0	9.3	17.8	28.4	32.2	62.3
Collections of readings	12	29	12.0	4.6	6.7	13.5	81.3	80.4
Reference books	12	21	13.2	5.3	10.3	10.3	76.5	84.4
Journal and/or magazine articles	32	57	6.7	5.0	3.4	5.1	89.9	89.9
Newspapers	5	15	4.3	7.2	6.5	7.2	89.2	85.6
Syllabi and handout materials	15	16	4.6	1.6	4.5	8.3	90.9	90.1
Other	7	10	19.2	11.6	3.9	12.5	76.9	75.9
Total number of pages	402	551	--	--	--	--	--	--

*Note. Percentages based on the total number of instructors who used the reading material.

Table 4

Comparison of Part-Time and Full-Time Faculty
on Use of Instructional Media

Instructional Media	Part-Time (N=351)	Full-Time (N=1669)
Films	46.2	59.7
Single concept film loops	6.6	13.0
Filmstrips	19.1	29.3
Slides	29.9	38.5
Audiotape slide/film combination	15.1	25.2
Overhead projected transparencies	30.2	44.9
Audiotapes, cassettes, records	31.3	35.9
Videotapes	15.1	26.4
Television	10.0	13.0
Maps, charts, illustrations, displays	37.3	36.9
Three dimensional models	19.9	29.3
Scientific instruments (NSF only)	27.5	42.1
Natural preserved or living specimens (NSF only)	12.3	17.0
Lecture or demonstration experiments involving chemical reagents or physical apparatus (NSF only)	18.1	29.2

Table 5

Comparison of Part-Time and Full-Time Faculty on Availability and Use of Instructional Support Services

Support Service	Assistance Available		Utilized	
	Part-Time (N=351)	Full-Time (N=1669)	Part-Time (N=351)	Full-Time (N=1669)
Clerical help	76.4	81.4	51.3	67.9
Test-scoring facilities	39.0	52.6	13.4	23.6
Tutors	38.2	48.3	21.9	32.1
Readers	8.3	11.9	3.7	5.3
Paraprofessional aids/ instructional assistants	15.7	20.9	9.1	11.1
Media production facilities/assistance	57.0	68.2	31.1	40.2
Library/bibliographical assistance	63.3	72.3	33.6	43.4
Laboratory assistants (NSF)	18.6	25.9	13.7	21.2

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